

take me under by themundaneweirdo

Series: [hold my breath \(and let it bury me\)](#) [6]

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Characters: Billy Hargrove, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Neil Hargrove, Original Child Character(s), Susan Hargrove

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Summary:

The house was too quiet.

take me under

Author's Note:

I'm back. Finally.

The house was too quiet.

Usually, there was the bustling of Susan in the kitchen, pots and pans clinking together, or the thump of Neil moving about in his room to get ready for work, his shoes tapping on the hardwood. The house creaked as they all did their morning routines, Max getting up to shower before migrating to the nursery to feed Jaclyn, the three month old greedily sucking down what her mother gave her, while Billy got up and dressed for the day. He occasionally would shower unless he'd showered the night before, which wasn't uncommon with how the baby likes to spit up on him before being put down for bed.

But, there was no redhead making so much damn noise in the kitchen, no man in the bedroom just down the hallway from Billy's own room, and not even the sound of the shower being used. No, there wasn't any of that, it would've been silent if Jaclyn wouldn't have been so loud.

The three month old was snuggled between her parents, Max turned to her side and Billy laid on his back, one arm around the redhead's shoulders, one under his head, as Max held the baby close to her chest. Both parents were naked from the waist up, the blondes boxers and Max's panties kept them decent, and the baby was also without anything but a diaper. The blonde was staring at the ceiling, listening closely to the sounds of his daughter drinking her early morning meal, the redhead caught in the tender moment of them being skin-to-skin with Jaclyn. But, he was too distracted to coo or make baby talk like he usually would've.

The night before, Susan sat Billy and Max down to tell them that she and Neil were getting a divorce.

If it had been another situation, any other situation besides the one they were in, Billy thought he might've been happy. After all, he

hadn't care too much for either redhead when they first began to be a family, he ignored them to his best ability. If he hadn't come to accept Susan as a friend, or even as a mother in some ways, or accepted Max as a lover, he might've been thrilled to know he wasn't going to be seeing them anymore. And, maybe, if he didn't have three month old Jaclyn, or had craved a special place in his heart for his girls, it would've been different.

But, it was the matter of that Billy did care, he didn't want his happiness taken away from him, he loved them, Max, Jaclyn, and even Susan. He wanted them to be with him, he wouldn't be able to handle the hollowness that their absence would leave behind, like an ever present reminder that they'd be gone. He was finally happy, or at least to a happy point where he was able to enjoy his life with his daughter and Max, making memories and learning to forgive himself.

Susan had said it was a mutual agreement, but Billy didn't know how much of that was true. Neil was an asshole, a complete psychopath with nothing but bad and hurtful intentions, and he was capable of some of the most horrible things, but Susan, she was different. The older redhead was kind, and so understanding it made Billy's head spin, how she just let go of what she needed to in order to keep herself and her family happy. She was forgiving, sometimes too forgiving, and maybe that's why she was agreeing to divorce Neil. Susan was basically excusing his wrongs with a piece of paper that ended their marriage.

And Neil, well, he could be controlling, and he was demanding at times, demanded something or someone that Susan just simply wasn't. The oldest Hargrove wanted someone who hadn't seen his bad side, that hadn't seen how he abused his son and nearly pushed him over the edge, but Susan had seen it all. Neil had nothing to hide behind once he struck Billy across the face in front of the older redhead, left a red hand print on his own son. She knew too much about him, it would be all too easy for Susan to accuse him of abuse, and he would be convicted because there are some mental scars that have yet to heal on Billy.

But, maybe that's why Susan wanted a divorce. If Neil was that destructive and hateful toward his own flesh and blood, how long would it have been until he raised his hand to Max? Just how long

before he would've hit her, slapped her, or even raped her because Billy knew how sick the fucker was, how demented he was. He needed to be put away for even thinking about defiling a young girl that like, and if that couldn't convict him, maybe the everlasting scars on his son would be enough to close the jail cell. He deserved to rot.

Susan, though, if she was worried about Max's safety, she would've left way earlier. Because honestly, Neil could've fucked up and hit her at any moment, struck her or even raised his voice at her, and Billy had no doubt that Susan would've bolted. He supposed the only reason she wouldn't have done that for him is because he was not her son, step-son yes, but as far as blood went, he was nothing more than the tag along teen that came with the marriage. He hoped she thought more of him.

"What are you thinking about?"

Max's free hand ran along his toned stomach, feeling how the muscles tensed and relaxed as he breathed deep, and her other stayed around the baby that's suckles were beginning to taper off. Billy glanced over at the redhead, her eyes already boring into his, her face bright, but he knew that she knew what he was thinking, she just wanted him to say it.

He sighed. "What's about to happen."

Susan had left earlier to meet with the lawyer to go over the basics of the papers, something that she'd apparently had for a while, which made Billy wonder if this had been coming for a while. Sure, the older redhead probably wasn't as happy as she'd like to be with Neil, but she was always smiling and glowing when around Billy and Max.

The younger redhead shifted, wriggled around until she was on her back, a dozing Jaclyn nestled safely on her chest, between her breasts, Billy's armed pillowed her head. "Nothing is going to happen, Billy. We're going to be okay."

"Do you even know what happens in a divorce, Max?"

Billy's blue eyes were wide as he glared at her, like he'd just been

slapped across his face, his nostrils blew hot air like he was trying to keep his anger down. But, he knew Max could see through that mask, he wasn't angry or even remotely mad, if anything, he was hysterical.

The blonde felt like his world was about to be torn into two, his girls were going to be taken and whatever safety he had against Neil was going to be ripped from his grasp. Susan would take Max and Jaclyn and move, she'd leave Billy behind because he wasn't her child or her concern. He didn't want to go back to hiding bruises and cuts, to wearing jackets and long sleeve shirts during the summer to keep his hurting hidden. He certainly didn't want to become a punching bag for his father again, he'd come too far just to go back to square one.

One of Max's hands drifted from Jaclyn's half asleep form to his face, tracing the sharp cheek bone, up under his eye and back down over his lips. He watched her, his eyes had softened while she felt over his face, like trying to tell him it was okay. But, Billy didn't know how truthful that was in their situation.

Jaclyn gurgled, and both parents turned their attention to her as a tiny fist was being shoved into her mouth. Her eyes, just like Billy's and Max, were blue and big and wet, so beautiful it made the blondes chest restrict. It made his heart ache, and his eyes twinge with tears thinking that maybe soon he wouldn't be able to look at his baby girl anymore, wouldn't be able to be so close to her or touch her. He didn't know if he could stand that.

Billy removed his arm from under Max's head, rolled out of bed and slipped into his jeans from the night before. He could feel the redheads eyes on him, questioning his moves but yet not asking. He didn't care, he needed to go.

"I'm gonna go smoke."

Max nodded, and Billy went to the back porch without anymore to say.

The blonde gets to the porch and tears open a new pack of cigarettes, the fancy kind Steve Harrington gave him, the ones that were too expensive for Billy to even think about. He lit it up, breathed in the heavy, million dollar that smoke filled his lungs and clouded his

head, and he felt like he was on fire. He hadn't smoked in months, mostly because he didn't want Jaclyn to get sick from the smell, and Max persuaded him to put them down. While he didn't want to pick up the habit again, he needed something to calm his nerves.

Susan could come home and tell Max to pack her and the three month olds shit up, they could be gone in a matter of hours, way out of reach. The redheads could be in another state before the week was up, and Billy would be left alone to deal with the aftermath of his father. God, he really didn't want the bruises and cuts and scars, he didn't want mottled skin and crusty, bloody welts. He couldn't be left like that.

And, he certainly didn't want to lose Max or Jaclyn. The younger redhead, his beautiful angel wrapped in youth and innocence, grounded him, kept him sane. He loved her so much, too much, he would have fought tooth and nail for her, Hell, Billy would've died for her. He loved her so much and he just wanted her happy, wanted her to feel the love he had for her and the want he had. The blonde wanted to make sure Max was taken care of, make sure she getting the hugs and kisses she deserved, make sure she was being held at night because he knew she loved to be held.

Billy wanted to marry her someday, have a big ass, over-the-top wedding if that kept a smile on Max's face. She would've looked so beautiful in a white gown, her fiery hair out of the way so Billy could gaze upon her, really look at her and take in all her Heavenly beauty. And, a ring would've looked so amazing, so perfect on her small finger, a diamond that sparkled and shone even in the darkest of places.

God, he just wanted her, all she had to offer. Max's body, her mind, her heart, and her soul. He wanted it all even if he didn't deserve it, Billy craved it. He couldn't go on without her reassuring smiles, her gentle kisses and words, or the way she expressed her love for him. Sometimes she just held him, let Billy wrap himself around her and they'd fall asleep like that, content and happy. Or, Max will let him kiss her breathless because sometimes he needs to feel her, her sweet breath ghosting over his mouth, soft lips on his. Billy just needed her always.

And Jaclyn, his sweet little girl that looked so much like him, he couldn't let go of her. He just couldn't, he wouldn't be able to watch her disappear in the horizon while Susan drove all three of them away, Max in the passengers side or in the back, cooing at the screaming three month old. The strawberry blonde baby might not have come into this world under excellent circumstances, and Billy might've had a few heart attacks before she came, but he didn't regret her. How could he ever regret such a perfect little being like his daughter?

Jaclyn was too precious for her own good, she was almost always wearing the bright smile that she shared with Max, and when she wasn't grinning like a cat, she was quiet for the most part. The only times she'd actually cried was in the hospital, and the three month old cried when Susan tried to get Neil to hold her. Jaclyn screamed and kicked her little feet, so much to point where Max had to take her back, and Billy had to keep himself from grinning or laughing.

That was his girl, she knew danger.

And, the thing with Jaclyn is that, while she didn't know her family situation, she seemed to know who were her parents. She let Susan hold her, of course, but she'd also squirmed until the younger redhead got ahold of her. But, sometimes even her mother couldn't calm her down, so the baby was handed to Billy, and she quieted down immediately. Both redheads were astounded, but the blonde was smug.

God, Billy really couldn't let them go. He refused to just let them walk out of his life, divorce be damned.

He hadn't even realized he was crying until a droplet of water landed on his fingers, just a bit away from his cigarette. It was about to go out and he hadn't even smoked half of it. Billy sighed and relit the cancer stick, all of it ash in a few drags, and he wiped at his eyes. He couldn't afford to be crying at that moment, he needed to be stable for his family.

He finished the cigarette and flicked it off into the yard, wiped his eyes again for good measure because he didn't want Max to know he was crying. He needed to be strong for her, and for Jaclyn, his sweet

little girl that'll always need him.

Billy went back into the house, his eyes and nose a little more red and his sinuses stuffy, and decided he needed a shower. He didn't wash the night before, and plus, he didn't want the smell of the cigarette smoke to get around Jaclyn, specially in her young age. The blonde hadn't smoked in months, he quit because he didn't want his girl catching something in her lungs. God, he'd kill himself.

Billy went to his bedroom to gather some clean clothes, some boxers, pants and a shirt, and he heard Max's sweet, gentle voice just down the hall in the nursery. The blondes smiled as he ventured down to said room, peeking in to find the redhead dressed in a sundress, bouncing a grinning Jaclyn in her arms as she sang a little tune. It was the song from the baby mobile that Billy had helped her put up just a little over half a year before.

"She's a daddy's girl," he spoke, flipped his clothes over his arm.

Max grins as she turned to him, eyed him from his place on the doorway. Her face was flush and her hair mused, something erotic and beautiful all the same to him. The redhead always looked perfect.

She glanced at Jaclyn in her arms, "Are you a daddy's girl? Hm?"

The baby gurgled and squealed, her hands flying up to grasp Max's hair. Billy chuckled, "I'll take that as a yes. I'm gonna shower, get this smoke smell off me."

Max nodded as he disappeared down the hall again.

The shower water felt good against his skin, although It wasn't hot enough to keep his mind from thinking too hard on what was to come for him and his family. Billy still worried, thought about it could've been the last day he ever saw Max or their baby girl, could've even been the last day of happiness he'd ever have. God, he really hoped it wasn't his last time being wholesome and complete, he wouldn't be able to go on at all, he'd just break down and collapse. Billy loved them too much, Hell, he even loved Susan to some degree. He had to believe that things were going to be okay, for the sake of his family.

As he lathered up his hands, Billy thought about how Susan had left that morning. The older redhead wasn't in hassle, although she was still frazzled. She had dressed nicely as always, respectful for someone her age, but her hair hadn't been touched, and not one drop of makeup had been applied to her face. It was odd to see Susan without her silvery or brassy lids and subtle pink lipstick, she looked naked. Almost sickly, is Billy had to be honest.

It really made the blonde wonder if his step-mother was really holding herself together all this time, or had she been slowly falling apart before his and Max's eyes? And why hadn't they noticed? Billy saw her everyday, he spoke to her everyday, and he always complimented her on her makeup because he knew she was self-conscious about her age. Susan reminded him of Mrs. Wheeler, or even Hoppers wife, they were all aware of their age and how they were changing. But, Susan wore her age well, Billy silently hoped Max would age like that.

And, Neil hadn't been home in, well, weeks. Maybe that's why Billy's life was doing okay, because his father wasn't there to push him around to make some snarky remark to him or Max. But, while it was safe haven for them, it must've been a Hell for the older redhead. She might've seemed cold about the whole situation, but the blonde knew how sensitive Susan could be. God, he only hoped she was okay.

Billy rinsed and dried off before he slipped into his clothes. His clean jeans felt good against his hairy legs, his shirt so soft, the front halfway open and the bottom tucked into his pants, his usual look. He stepped out into the hallway, glanced at the clock to see that he'd fucked around and stayed in the bathroom for half an hour. He didn't care too much, School was out and he didn't have plans for the day. He had really hoped that Susan would've gotten back to he could talk to her about what was going to happen.

Billy went to his room to put his towel and dirty clothes in his hamper, only to find Max napping on his bed. He smiled, but he didn't go over to touch her or wake her, just left her alone and left the room once he had put his dirty things away. The blonde checked on Jaclyn, making sure she was sound asleep and not having a silent fit, before making his way to the kitchen to make something to eat.

He stopped outside the kitchen door way when he heard someone crying.

Billy peeked inside to find Susan, still without making and her hair was still undone, but her shoulders were shaking in an effort to keep her sobs quiet. The redhead sounded nasal, like she'd been crying her little eyes out for too long, and her throat sounded thick, almost as if she'd been either screaming her lungs out or sobbing. Maybe both. And, oh boy, her shoulders her slumped and her whole body just lurched like she had no bones to hold her up. God, it broke his heart to see her so upset.

It pissed the blonde of knowing that Neil probably had something to do with it, the older man not knowing his boundaries. There was no telling what could've made Susan upset, she'd been on edge for a while, and maybe it was all just coming to a head at the moment. And when did she even get home? Why hadn't she checked on Max or Jaclyn? Fuck, Susan must've been bad off.

Billy knocked lightly on the door frame, internally winced as the redhead startled and turned around. She looked worse than she sounded. Her eyes were red and wet as she stared at him, her cheeks flushed and rubbed raw from probably wiping away tears all morning.

"You good?"

Susan straightened herself before she spoke, "I'm okay, I just..."

She bit her lip in thought, her arms circling around her middle as though she didn't want to ask what she wanted. It was obvious Susan was holding something back, and it made Billy's belly turn unpleasantly.

"Will you hug me?"

Billy nodded without hesitation because he couldn't imagine how alone she felt, her marriage falling apart, and she was too scared to even ask her step-son for a hug. He stepped forward and Susan reached for him, letting out a small cry as she wrapped her arms around his shoulders, his own going to her middle. He could feel her

shaking, like she was trying to control herself, but the redhead didn't need to. Billy just wanted her to let it all out if it meant her feeling better, even if it caused him to have to change shirts.

He didn't say anything as they stood there, just holding each other, Billy letting her take comfort because he knew she wasn't going to get it anywhere else. She was a strong woman, she'd dealt with things from Neil that she shouldn't have because no marriage was supposed to be based off of a mutual attraction and the fact that they had kids who needed parental figures. Father, that's the last thing the oldest Hargrove had ever been to Max, and if he was like toward her, Billy couldn't imagine how he acted toward Susan behind closed doors.

Billy had the sudden urge to push Susan away and search her for injuries, because if that sick fucker he touched her and hurt her, the blonde would have all the more reason to kill his father. Neil didn't know his boundaries, he didn't know that Billy loved the women of the household more than he'd ever loved himself, and he'd severely hurt the man if the blonde found out that he'd ever hurt them. Especially Susan.

The woman who put her love and faith into him, trusted he could change, and even moved states for him, but Neil had probably still hit her. It made Billy think about how he should've been looking for the signs of his step-mothering being abused, but he was too caught up in the wonderment of his little lady and daughter. And, if Neil had been hurting her, whether it be yelling or even going as far as putting his hands on her, he had another thing coming.

"We're gonna be okay," Billy said, rubbing her back while Max's words from earlier flowed out.

He didn't have much to offer her at that point, but Susan seemed to understand as she nodded before pulling back from his grasp. Her hands held his face, her red eyes dried considerably from crying earlier, and she just studied him. It made Billy uncomfortable to no end, because he didn't know why she was gazing at him, as if she was searching for something. Susan's eyes kept going between his eyes and mouth and back again, and the one of her hands felt a blonde curl that hung at his shoulder.

She shakily chuckled, and it scared Billy honestly, but before he could at anything, she beat him to it. “Would you look at that? She does have you hair.”

“What?”

The blonde stumbled back, almost tripping over his own feet. His eyes blew wide and he had to grasp the counter behind him to keep his balance, but Susan’s expression didn’t go cold or crumble. Despite being a emotional mess and had just cried her little eyes out, the redheads eyes were soft and her mouth in a pitiful smile, almost a little sad if Billy had to be honest. She looked, well, sadly humbled, like she’d recently made a life changing discovery and had just accepted it. He just hoped she wasn’t talking about what he thought she was.

“What the Hell are you talking about?”

Susan smiled big again, but more tears gathered in her eyes. She wiped at them as she spoke, “I had my suspicions, because why would you all the sudden become so protective over Max? I mean, really? Why?”

She began to laugh readily, steadily wiping at her eyes as her cries became louder and louder until she was almost sobbing again. No, no, she couldn’t know. There was no way of her knowing, Susan couldn’t know that Billy was Jaclyn’s father, that he’d had sex with an underage girl. Her daughter, she couldn’t know that he had sex with her daughter.

“I thought– I thought maybe you were just being nice because Max had it rough, and I didn’t even stop to think that it you. I mean, she slept in your bed, I let her sleep in your bed. A-and, then one day, you two just changed.”

The redhead sighs, rubbing her nose. “I thought we could all be a happy family. Me, Max, you, Neil, and the baby. We could’ve been so, so happy. But, then Jaclyn was born and she looked so much like you. She still does, she’s basically your twin.”

Billy couldn’t believe the things spilling from her mouth, because she

knew it all.

“God, I was so angry with you. I wanted to kill you for doing that to her, for raping my little girl!”

The blonde felt his own eyes spring full with tears, and soon they were flowing down his face. The hot tears went down his cheeks, wet and angry, because maybe Susan was right. Even after all the time he spent trying to tell himself that Max wanted him, he had never been sure. And at that moment, the older redhead pulled every little loose thread and left Billy exposed. He had nothing to hide behind.

“But,” she sighed, “when I went back to the hospital room, and I found you asleep in the bed with Max, Jaclyn right there between you two, I...”

Susan suddenly sobbed, covering her mouth with her hand. Why couldn't she just spit it out, Billy thought. Why couldn't she just tell him that she was disgusted with him, that she wanted him to rot in and prison cell for what he'd done? All she had to do was scream at him and yell at him, call him what he was, and he'd be on his way to the jail. Just fucking say it, he thought, shutting his eyes for impact. Just fucking—

“I forgave you.”

Billy's eyes flew open, his breathe got caught in his throat as Susan looked at him, seeming even more broken than she did when she first got home. But, although she was more distressed, the redhead also looked relieved in a way.

“I forgave you, because I've put my marriage before you and Max for such a long time, and you had finally been able to be happy. I was happy that my daughter was being loved, and taken care of. And, my granddaughter, I couldn't take her father away from her. I just couldn't do that to her.”

Susan grabbed his face again, but he didn't pull away. “I forgive you, Billy. I forgive you.”

It was Billy's turn to sob as Susan's arms wrapped around him and

pulled him close, held him as he did her just a few minutes before. He just sobbed, and cried, so loud and heavy that he was surprised it hadn't woken Max from her nap. He clung to the older redhead, let her rub his back and kiss his head because that's what he needed, the motherly comfort that he hadn't had in years.

The possibilities of Billy having the family he'd always wanted seemed so much closer then, and maybe one day in the future, he could proudly say he was Jaclyn's father. He could marry Max if she'd have him, and he'd give them everything they ever wanted, a big house, nice clothes, all of it. And Susan, he could spoil Susan for being the Heaven sent angel that she was. She deserved it, she deserved a lot of things.

God, he'd never felt more alive.

"Earth to Billy."

Max's small fingers snaps in front of his face, the moon light illuminating her skin. He shakes his head before his focus goes to her. He glances down at her, her cheek pressed to his bare chest, making her mouth look squished out. She's so beautiful, he can't handle it sometimes.

"Yeah?"

She put her hand on his sternum, the muscles twitching under her palm. "I asked you what you and mom talked about today? Why were you crying?"

Billy smiles, the arm around the redheads waist growing tight as he pulls her impossibly closer, hand sliding under her bed shirt. He thought about the future, how close it is and how bright it seems, he just can't wait.

"Nothing, baby. I'll tell you in the morning."

He can't wait to tell her.

Author's Note:

So.... ya'll shook?

Ending options:

- Wedding or breakup
- Another baby or miscarriage
- Max/Billy moves on

Comments are my fuel!

Also looking for an editor!